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File #: 2021-504

Type: Regular Agenda Item

Body: [City Council](#)

On agenda: 1/19/2021

Title: Recommendation to Rename Former Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park. (Recreation 280)

Attachments: 1. [Exhibit 1 - Top 10 Names for Renaming Jackson Park](#), 2. [Exhibit 2 - Data from Community Forum and Survey](#), 3. [Exhibit 3 - 2016 Policy for Naming City Facilities](#), 4. [Presentation](#), 5. [Presentation - REVISED](#), 6. [Correspondence - Updated 1/19](#)

Text

Title

Recommendation to Rename Former Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park. (Recreation 280)

Body

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recommendation to the City Council to rename the former Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park is based on the work of a diverse, community-led committee and the unanimous vote of the Recreation and Parks Commission (Commission). This renaming is the result of City Council's previous direction to rename the park because it was named after President Andrew Jackson who was a slave holder and was responsible for the forced relocation and death of thousands of Native Americans. Parks are important public spaces, their names have impacts, and should represent the values of the community. The City of Alameda's (City) Naming Policy requires City Council approval to change the name of a City facility, including City parks.

BACKGROUND

Alameda's first park was named after President Andrew Jackson in 1909. President Jackson personally enslaved hundreds of Africans and was the architect of the Indian Removal Act. Under the Act and under Jackson's "Removal Policy" (now known as the Trail of Tears), Federal troops evicted indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands in the southeast U.S. and marched them to new reservations in Oklahoma, resulting in thousands of deaths from starvation and exposure.

At the May 10 and June 14, 2018 meetings, in response to a written request from a community member to rename Jackson Park, the Commission discussed the legacy of President Andrew Jackson and the policy and process to rename a City park. The Commission did not take action on the renaming request and instead requested the item return for further discussion at a later date.

Community members organized an online, local petition to rename Jackson Park and in 2020 received over 1,253 signatures in support of renaming the Park. Of the total signatures, 1,070 (84.5%) identified as Alameda residents. The complete petition and additional documents from the Park Renaming Committee process are available at <https://www.alamedaca.gov/Shortcut-Content/Events-Activities/Rename-Jackson-Park>.

At its July 9, 2020 meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to recommend to City Council that Jackson Park be renamed. The Commission also established a subcommittee of the Chair and Vice-Chair to facilitate a park naming committee that represents a diverse cross-section of the Alameda community including representation from youth and from the Park neighbors. The two Commissioners sat on the park naming committee as non-voting members to listen to the discussion and bring that forward to the Commission. The Commission also committed to recommend a new Park name to City Council by December 31, 2020.

At its **July 21, 2020 meeting**, City Council unanimously approved de-naming Jackson Park and to immediately remove the Park sign. City Council also directed staff to establish a diverse committee that represented all of Alameda's neighborhoods and interests, including youth. Specific direction was given to staff to outreach on social media and to the Committee to Rename Jackson Park about the opportunity to serve on a park renaming committee.

DISCUSSION

The Commission's subcommittee appointed 13 Park Renaming Committee (Committee) members. Significant outreach for the committee application process was conducted across multiple social media platforms, email and outreach to Alameda organizations. Most members chosen for the Committee submitted an application based on specific questions and a few members were directly appointed in an effort to represent a wide range of interests, including youth and park neighbors, in the park renaming process as directed by the Commission and City Council. This Park Renaming Committee was a dedicated group who met weekly from September through December with additional work between the meetings. The City is grateful for their time, deep thought, and creativity on this renaming effort.

The Committee began by establishing its process, goals, and naming criteria.

Committee Goals:

- 1) *Recommend names for the park formerly known as Jackson Park to the Commission.* More information is detailed below on this goal.
- 2) *Recommend ideas to revise the existing Naming Policy and ways the naming process may be made more inclusive.* Recommendations on changes to the citywide Naming Policy and the process to name new parks and rename parks is a separate item on the City Council agenda. This will be an initial discussion to seek City Council feedback with further public comment and discussion by the Commission in February 2021.
- 3) *To educate the community on why the Park is being renamed.* The committee focused on education about why the Park is being renamed as part of a Community Forum on November 23, 2020. In addition, a smaller group of the Committee will work with staff to develop text for permanent educational signage at the Park.

As the first step to establish a list of names and ultimately a recommendation, the Committee created the following naming criteria:

Naming Criteria: Seek a park name that reflects inclusion, diversity, and equity of the entire community of Alameda, and which represents social justice, human rights, and/or anti-racism. If a person's name is submitted, the person must be deceased. Submitted park names should be related to Alameda and/or the greater SF Bay Area.

The Committee then solicited name ideas from the Alameda community. An outreach subcommittee reached out to over 100 organizations and social media groups, including information distribution to all tenants with the Alameda Housing Authority and in all book bags through the Alameda Library. Information for name solicitation was also emailed to more than 10,000 people. Significant effort was put into diverse and inclusive outreach to invite people into the conversation who may not traditionally engage in city-led meetings and activities. Ultimately, the Committee received 155 individual name ideas from more than 200 submissions.

The names were vetted to meet the first basic naming criteria from the citywide naming policy that requires a person to be deceased. A vetting subcommittee then reviewed and scored the names based on the criteria described above. A top list of names was discussed by the entire Committee and the list of top ten names was finalized. Exhibit 1 lists the top ten names.

On November 23, 2020, the Committee hosted a Community Forum to educate the community on why the Park is being renamed, provide information about each of the top ten names and then to solicit feedback on those names. More detailed information on each of the top ten names is described in Exhibit 1. Staff invited the Language Carrier from the Confederated Villages of Lisjan Ohlone and the Sogorea Te Land Trust to join the Community Forum to share their thoughts on two of the names, Ohlone and Chochenyo. Those representatives shared at that time that they supported both names. In subsequent conversations with representatives of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, they confirmed that they preferred the name Chochenyo because it is more specific to Alameda as the language the Ohlone people spoke in this area. A poll was taken during the Community Forum and Ohlone was the top name choice with the names Alameda and Chochenyo receiving the second most votes.

After the Forum, staff posted detailed information on all ten names, the video and chat from the Community Forum and opened an online survey with the top ten names. This survey was available to the public until November 27 and received 625 responses. The survey asked for respondents' top five name choices. Alameda received the most votes (384) and Ohlone received the second most votes (295). Combined, Ohlone and Chochenyo received 410 votes. These survey numbers only provide a perspective with some caveats because the survey asked for the top five names and some respondents chose less than five names. Additionally, the survey was open for a short period of time with limited outreach on the ARPD social media and email list due to the time constraints. The included demographics survey questions showed that the respondents did not represent the full diversity of the community. The polling data from the Forum and Community Survey are on Exhibit 2.

The Committee then met to consider all of the data, including polling and discussion at the Community Forum, the online survey and the members' own discussions with community members. The Committee formulated its final name recommendation, which included four names, to the Commission. On December 10, 2020 the Commission unanimously voted to recommend the name Chochenyo Park to the City Council.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives include:

- 1) Rename Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park.
- 2) Consider an alternate name for Jackson Park from the names submitted.
- 3) Send back to Recreation & Parks Commission to consider further based on specific direction from the City Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Renaming the Park will require funding of approximately \$10,000 to purchase and install new Park signage. In December 2020, City Council appropriated \$5,000 in the Public Art Fund (285) for a temporary public art installation (File 2020-8446; Resolution No. 15725). The additional \$10,000 needed is available within the previously appropriated General Fund budget for Park Maintenance (51210). No additional appropriations are needed.

Budget Request	Revenue/ Expenditure	Fund Number	Fund Description	Project Number	Project Name	Budget Amount
Procurement and contractual services	Funding available in expenditure budget	001	General Fund - Park Maintenance (51210)	N/A	N/A	\$10,000

MUNICIPAL CODE/POLICY DOCUMENT CROSS REFERENCE

This action has no effect on the Alameda Municipal Code. It is consistent with the City's current Naming Policy as to naming City facilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Approval of re-naming this Park is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15301, Existing Facilities, as a minor alteration of an existing public facility.

CLIMATE IMPACT

There are no identifiable climate impacts or climate action opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Renaming the former Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park.

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager defers to the Recreation & Parks Commission recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Wooldridge, Recreation and Parks Director

Financial Impact section reviewed,
Annie To, Finance Director

Exhibits:

1. Top 10 Names for Renaming Jackson Park
2. Data from Community Forum and Community Survey
3. 2016 Policy for Naming City Facilities

cc: Eric Levitt, City Manager